

wind, and had congregated among these pines (which were quite near to the heronry, but less exposed) for shelter.

I watched a most amusing little drama one day which took place below the windows of our hotel. A young Heron came down the estuary to feed among the many small creatures left on the mud-flats by the receding tide. His approach was heralded by much screeching and bad language from six gulls, who followed in his wake, hurling maledictions at him, of which he seemed perfectly oblivious. When he settled, the gulls did the same, but at a respectful distance from him, and most of them on the water, continuing to talk against him. Presently he rose to seek "fresh fields and pastures new," and the gulls scattered in all directions, in the most ignominious manner. The heron sailed away majestically, the gulls rallied and once more followed, but this time one Herring Gull, more courageous than his comrades, attacked the heron from behind as he flew, dealing savage blows at the base of the tail, of which, however, the latter appeared to take no notice.

Sometimes, when attacked like this, herons utter a very curious cry, rather harsh and sharp. Generally the gulls leave them in peace higher up the estuary, near to the heronry, as if they considered that they had a right to fish there; but I have seen them worried even there. Curiously enough, the gulls do not seem to mind the cormorants, much worse offenders as they are in the matter of poaching. Perhaps there is a family feud between the two races, or a natural antipathy like that of horses for donkeys, on account of the long legs and curious appearance of the heron.

BIRD BOOKS.—For those who cannot afford to get Seebohm, I would recommend Howard Saunders' "Manual of British Birds," or, less expensive still, Hudson's "British Birds," both excellent, though the former is, of course, much the greater authority.

D. B.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR.

DEAR EDITOR,

I have been thinking for a long time about writing to the students to try and get them interested in the work here. I am working entirely for one parish now, although I still live on at the Settlement, and my work is almost entirely among children belonging to the Sunday School. We have the children in the Parish Room once a week (boys on Thursday and girls on Monday) for about an hour and a half, from 6 p.m., to play and work. The girls sew, knit, etc., and are easily kept busy and happy, but the boys are more difficult to entertain. The little ones play with toys, and some do Smyrna rugs and a few baskets. The great difficulty is our lack of funds to buy material, and also the constant want of new toys. I have been wondering whether Miss Mason would be willing to let the students help us as a body, and look upon us as a kind of mission of their own. They could perhaps interest their children in us, and we should be so glad of cast-off toys, books, etc. I am thinking of writing to the magazine about it, and trying to get the ex-students to interest themselves in our children. If every student sent us 6d. a year we should be quite rich, and could do wonders for the children. At present I get between forty and fifty children each night, and have one helper. What I am longing for just now is an efficient helper, who could teach wood-sloyd to the big boys, aged from twelve to fourteen. We have lost many of our big boys because there has been nothing much for them to do when they came. They made some baskets, but they are tired of that, besides which it was rather unsatisfactory as I could not give them the proper amount of attention, and Hoxton boys cannot sit quiet and wait patiently for their turn to come. Another thing I should like to start is a children's library, so that the children could come on an

extra night and sit and read quietly. This has been started at the other end of Hoxton with wonderful results. At first the children looked at the pictures and then threw the books at each other; now you can go into the room and see forty or fifty children sitting in absolute silence with their eyes glued on their books. Does Miss Mason know that there are two of her students working in this parish, Miss Maud Leney being the other? The Vicar greatly appreciates our training, and said once, "All the good things come from Ambleside." Miss Leney helps with the married women chiefly.

Since writing this letter our "Busy Bees" (the name we give to our children's classes) have increased in numbers, and we now use one of the L.C.C. Schools. We have three classrooms, one of them cleared for drill, dancing, singing, games, etc. We are also allowed the use of the playground on fine summer evenings, but our numbers will probably decrease as the evenings get longer. The Hoxton child *loves* the streets, and we shall have to start very interesting games, etc., if we want to keep all the children during the summer months. I am much interested in the article in this month's "Plant" on the C.S.U. It may interest "A Friend" to know that the Settlement at which I live is the C.S.U. Settlement. Perhaps she would like to pay us a visit and see something of the work. Some of our "busy bees" were made very happy yesterday by the arrival of a beautiful box of primroses, buttercups, and daisies from a charming House of Education Student. We were particularly charmed with the daisies and buttercups, as we never see them in Hoxton. Hoping this letter will not be thought too lengthy, Yours very sincerely,

MABEL CONDER.

Maurice Hostel,
51, Herbert Street, Hoxton, N.
October 8th, 1907.

DEAR EX-STUDENTS,

Since you last had a letter we have been working at high pressure in preparation for the Sloyd examination, which took place on the last Saturday of last term. During the term many pleasant, though perhaps rather anxious hours, were spent up in the workroom on Saturday evenings amid glue and paste and other accompaniments of Sloyd.

For the examination we had a diagram for a carton model of a dog kennel to draw, and in the cardboard work, a small stampbox to cut and bind, which we found rather fidgety to do. Now with mingled feelings we are awaiting the results.

About a fortnight before the end of the term we had a visitor here, Dean Cronin, of Trinity Hall, Cambridge. He is anxious to start Nature work among his undergraduates, and came here to see something of our methods. He went out with us several times for Nature and Bird Walks.

A day or two before we broke up he came and gave a most interesting lecture on the Star of Bethlehem, its apparent motions, and how they influenced the movements of the Magi. This was greatly enjoyed by all present.

So much happened at half-term, that a whole letter could be written on it alone. First in order of events came the Fancy Dress Dance we had on Friday night, from 7.30-9.30. Everyone was present, and we all enjoyed it very much. Some of the costumes were most original, and all well got up. The Babes in the Woods brought the robin with them; the latter was most useful as a pianist!

Dun Rusk was represented, but unfortunately only for a very short time, as the somewhat fragile dress had to be changed for something more durable.

One of the Juniors, as Golliwog, was excellent. We wondered what would happen to her hair afterwards, but the next day it was quite normal.

Robinson Crusoe was somewhat warmly attired in furs and skins, and a ploughboy was most realistic. Miss Parish and Miss Franklin, who were staying here for the week-end, also came in fancy dress.

The next day the Juniors gave us an entertainment in the form of scenes from "Nicholas Nickleby"; it was excellent. Mrs. Nickleby tumbled on in a most delightful manner, and her son was all that could be desired. The "Old gentleman next door" seemed made for his part. He threw the vegetables over the wall with vigour, and scrambled over it himself with agility, and afterwards came down the chimney with some little difficulty; he really seemed to have taken leave of his senses. Mr. Linkinwater and Frank were most loveable gentlemen, while Miss La Creevy, a quite delightful little personage. We were all so sorry when the play was over. The Juniors certainly did give us about two hours thorough enjoyment.

The half-term expedition, which took place on the following Monday, was pronounced by all to have been a great success, in spite of the elements which at first seemed against us, so much so that there was an idea that the expedition would have to be abandoned.

The weather had been bitterly cold, and the snow was lying on the ground.

As we were going to Keswick there seemed some doubt as to whether the horses could manage with the roads in such a condition.

However, Monday morning was fine, so we set out. As it turned out we could hardly have seen the country to better advantage. The hills were all white, and when we got to the top of Dunmail Raise, the sharp outlines of Saddleback in the distance looked especially grand, as by that time the sun had begun to shine, and lit up first one peak and then another.

When we got to Keswick we divided up into parties, most

of us going to Friar's Crag, where that day the lake looked especially beautiful, closed in on almost all sides by the sharp-peaked mountains, all covered with snow. Other places visited were Crosthwaite Church, which is one of the few interesting old churches in these parts, and the Pencil Works, where we were shown through the whole process of making a pencil. At 2.30 we went for tea, and at 3.30 set out upon the journey back again. By the time we got to Thirlspot it was snowing hard again, but the novelty of being on a coach in such a storm was for once in a way more enjoyable than otherwise.

In the evening Miss Parish and Miss Franklin, who were sleeping down at Mrs. Clondesdale's, very kindly invited all the Seniors down to supper. As you can imagine, we were a very merry party. We came away about 9.30, and so ended a very happy and well-filled day.

In conclusion, I think you would like to hear about some dolls which Mrs. Franklin, who is staying with us just now, has brought with her. They have been done by a girl of thirteen who, owing to illness, has had to give up all regular lessons. The dolls have been cut out of paper, and represent various characters she has read about in Macaulay or Green, of which she is especially fond. Quite unaided she has collected the different facts about their appearances, dresses, etc. Those that we have here are the wives of Henry VIII. and the Cabal Ministers. The details of their dresses are quite wonderfully thought out, and the colouring has been very well done. All other news must be left for the next letter.

THE SENIORS.

Scale How, Ambleside.

May 10th, 1908.